

May 9, 2016

TO: State Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program Managers

RE: The FBI's Transition to a National Incident-Based
Reporting System (NIBRS)-Only Data Collection

Recent events across the nation have underscored the importance of having informed conversations about policing and crime policy. The FBI has a longstanding tradition of collecting and providing crime statistics for transparency and accountability in policing through its UCR Program. However, the time for improvement and the need for more precise data has arrived. After careful consideration, the FBI plans to discontinue its Summary Reporting System (SRS) for crime statistics and fully transition the UCR Program to the data-rich National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) data collection. This transition is supported by the Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Advisory Policy Board (APB), the International Association of Chiefs of Police, Major Cities Chiefs Association, Major County Sheriffs' Association, and the National Sheriffs' Association, as well as the Executive Branch of our government. On February 9, 2016, I concurred with the APB recommendation:

“The FBI UCR Program will transition to a NIBRS-only data collection by January 1, 2021, and will evaluate the probability of achieving that goal on an annual basis. Federal, state, local, and tribal agencies unable to meet the five year transition and who have committed to transitioning to NIBRS will collaborate with the FBI CJIS to develop a transition plan and timeline for conversion.”

By transitioning to a NIBRS-only data collection over the next five years, the FBI will have faster access to more robust data that is necessary to show how safe our communities are and to help law enforcement officials and municipal leaders better allocate resources to prevent and combat crime in their jurisdictions. Through the NIBRS, law enforcement agencies can meet the critical elements of transparency and accountability.

Already, 31 percent of participating agencies report their UCR statistics via the NIBRS. In the last few years, the FBI and the Bureau of Justice Statistics have partnered to increase the number of NIBRS participants through the National Crime Statistics Exchange (NCS-X) initiative. Currently, the FBI and the NCS-X team are working with local and state agencies as well as other law enforcement organizations across the country to improve the way crime data is reported. The FBI understands this transition comes with a financial burden and is committed to helping state UCR programs and the 400 agencies identified through the NCS-X initiative to obtain necessary resources to transition to NIBRS.

The NIBRS is the pathway to richer crime statistics that can improve our ability to address the important issues we face today. As we move forward, the transition from the SRS to

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the NIBRS is crucial to our success in providing better, more meaningful national crime data.

Sincerely yours,

James B. Comey
Director